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Fifty-ninth session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1693rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 28 May 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. FELIX-PAGANON (France)

- Examination of the annual report of the Administrative Authority for the year ended 30 September 1991: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (continued)

- Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, March 1992 (continued)

- Cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (General Assembly resolutions 2106B (XX) and 46/83)

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- Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (General Assembly resolutions 3057 (XXVIII) and 46/85)

- Attainment of self-government or independence by the Trust Territories (Trusteeship Council resolution 1369 (XVII) and General Assembly resolution 1413 (XIV)) and the situation in Trust Territories with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 46/71)

- Cooperation with the Special Committee on the situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly 1654 (XVI))

- Appointment of the Drafting Committee

- Organization of work

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

EXAMINATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1991: TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/1962*) (continued)

Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America): We are pleased to have an opportunity to address the petition presented yesterday by Otil a Beluad, a group of Palauans concerned about the future of Palau. I was troubled by this presentation for it seemed to be based on incomplete information, a misunderstanding of what the United States has been working towards and even a misunderstanding of the Palau Government's objectives and intentions.

One aspect of the petition with which we are in agreement is the importance of preserving the fragile environment of Palau. This has been a continuing concern of the United States in administering the trusteeship.

But here we must part ways with the petitioner, who we understand has not had an opportunity to review the 7 April 1992 letter of my Government to the Government of Palau. In particular, he has not understood that the military provisions of the Compact are included in the Compact strictly on a contingency basis. The petitioner is correct in saying that the strategic situation in the Pacific has changed, but what he has failed to perceive is that this change does not necessarily warrant a change in the Compact.

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

(Mrs. Tahir-Kheli, United States)

There are five basic points the petitioner raises and which I wish to address here.

The first is timing. The petitioner opposes a rapid end to the Trusteeship. That view is at variance with the findings of the Trusteeship Council's Visiting Mission, which reported that the vast majority of Palauans believe, as we do, that the trusteeship has outlived its usefulness and that the time has come for change. The United States does not want to delay unnecessarily the ending of the trusteeship. Rather we want to move deliberately but purposefully so as to enable Palau to take responsibility for itself at an early date, as it has so amply demonstrated it wishes to do.

But we are also interested in the integrity of the process leading to the solution to this issue, and we want a solution that will work and will not be subject to challenge in endless litigation. We are also concerned that Palau's permanent political status should be one that will meet Palau's needs.

The second issue is that of the validity of the process now under way in Palau: first to amend the Constitution and then to vote yet again on the Compact of Free Association. We cannot judge from here the validity of the signatures collected for the public initiative. But the United States can say that the operation of the Election Commission in Palau is part of the process of establishing a viable and functioning democracy, a part of the self-government about which this Council frequently speaks.

The Election Commission has found the signatures to be in order. If there are challenges to the findings of the Commission it will be for the judicial branch of the Palau Government to determine whether the established standards have been met. Palauan institutions will make that determination,

(Mrs. Tahir-Kheli, United States)

and we are convinced that the process, as well as the result, will show the significant progress that Palau has made towards self-government.

It is our sincere hope that the July referendum will stand up to legal scrutiny and that it will receive strong support from all segments of the Palau leadership and electorate. It would be regrettable if legal wrangling jeopardized the process and the voters were denied the right to determine for themselves whether the Constitution should be amended and whether the Compact should be adopted.

Thirdly, the petitioner proposes that the United Nations refuse to monitor a referendum on a constitutional amendment, and that the United States refuse to permit the financing of the balloting process unless and until all legal and political questions have first been fully resolved. I trust that the other members of the Council will agree that this recommendation certainly is unwise. Since no future referendum is completely immune from legal challenge, this recommendation would serve only to subvert the people's right to exercise self-determination while they await final adjudication of complaints which may well be found lacking in merit.

Fourthly, the petitioner asks that the United States await final adjudication of any pending legal challenges before bringing the Compact into effect. As opposed to delaying the referendum process, delaying the Compact's entry into force pending a final adjudication makes sense, and indeed this procedure is already assured in the text of the Compact Implementation Act as approved by the United States Congress in 1989. That Act conditions entry into force of the Compact on Palauan approval through a referendum "which is free from any legal challenge".

(Mrs. Tahir-Kheli, United States)

Finally, the petitioner asserts that changes in the world situation mandate modifications to the Compact. There have indeed been a number of changes in the situation since approval of the Compact Act by the United States Congress in 1986. But none of those changes would be likely to prompt the United States to negotiate a Compact more acceptable to Palau. Amendment of the Compact before it enters into effect could require renewed congressional approval of the entire package, including previously appropriated funding for the Compact. The current budgetary situation in the United States and Palau's decreased strategic importance in a post-cold war era would make it likely that the legislative process would result in a new Compact with diminished benefits to Palau.

On the other hand, revision after entry into force, through the Compact's amendment provisions would not subject the entire Compact to congressional action, and would be more likely to attain the result Palau desires. The United States has expressed its willingness to consider sympathetically such revision after the Compact has been approved. My Government has explained this to Palau both orally and in the 7 April letter.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I shall now call on members who wish to put questions to the representatives of the Administering Authority.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): Although, through the Visiting Mission to the Territory, members of the Council have received information supplementing that contained in the Administering Authority's annual report for fiscal year 1991, we have a number of questions on which we seek clarification.

(Mr. Berezovsky, Russian Federation)

Part III of the report, entitled "International and regional relations", states on page 10, under the subheading "Bureau of Foreign Affairs", that the Republic of Palau, with the cooperation of the Administering Authority, continued to establish friendly relations with neighbouring countries and participated in meetings of regional organizations. But we note a certain discrepancy between that and statements made by the Minister of State of Palau, who has expressed dissatisfaction at the fact that to a considerable extent these contacts have of late become more difficult.

(Mr. Berezovsky, Russian Federation)

We understand that Secretary's Order 3142 has come into play in this instance, but the representative of the Administering Authority might perhaps give us further details on the extent to which links between the Trust Territory of Palau and neighbouring States have been established, and particularly recently, following Secretary's Order 3142.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on Mr. Becker of the Department of State.

Mr. BECKER (Adviser): Under Secretary's Order 3142, we have asked that the Government of Palau advise us in advance of international contacts which the Government of Palau proposes to undertake. We have established a system for doing this. The Bureau of Foreign Affairs advises the Interior representative in Palau of meetings or other contacts which Palau proposes to have. He in turn advises the Department of the Interior and the Department of State of those proposed contacts. We then review that in Washington and respond as quickly as we can.

Palau has made a number of such requests in the last few months, and in almost every case we have granted its requests. There have been some instances in which we felt that Palau's Trust Territory status made it inappropriate for Palau to appear on the international scene as a full member of the international community. We do not believe that we should permit Palau to appear as a full member of that community, since it still is in a Trust Territory status. But within that limitation, we have approved numerous requests by Palau, and Palauan representatives have participated in a number of meetings. If the Council so desires, I will attempt to get Washington to prepare a list of recent requests and of the action which the Administering Authority has taken with respect to those requests.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): I am grateful to the representative of the Administering Authority for his additional explanation to the report and the situation in the Trust Territory.

I now have a question concerning the development of the infrastructure of Palau. Participating in the Visiting Mission to Palau, we met with a large number of the population and its representatives. More or less everywhere, aside from major questions affecting the political future of the Territory, the issue most often evoked was that of the state of the roads. We all understand why this should be so: the roads are the arteries that link remote parts of the Territory with the more developed central part, and are of course of particular importance to the development of that country's economy.

The report states, on page 28, there has been no major improvement of the road system this past year, and that plans for improvement are being studied. But the fact that plans are merely being studied is worrisome to us. It would appear that these plans should have been studied long ago and that the situation should now be clear.

That is the kind of question I like to ask. In the course of one of our visits to Babelthuap Island, we noted that some roads were in good condition, and that the Seabees were taking part in their construction. The Governor told us that the team was changing - the Seabees were leaving and removing the road-construction machinery. The Governor said that he might organize his own local human and other resources so that work might continue as soon as possible. But it seems to me that the departing teams might at least have left the necessary machinery for carrying out this road work. I believe such issues could somehow be swiftly agreed upon with the representative of the

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Administering Authority in the Territory and the local authorities and that the least developed sections of the infrastructure that we observed might be developed more quickly.

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So what interests me is the question of how swiftly the Administering Authority is reacting to the situation which arises, and in the future, how it could find mutually acceptable options in this area. We note in yesterday's statement of the Minister of State that measures are being taken for additional financing of road construction, and that is all to the good. Nevertheless, the report does highlight these questions, and we would really like to hear some additional views from the representatives of the Administering Authority.

Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America): I would like to point out that there has been great progress in road-building on Babelthuap; members of the Visiting Mission saw it when they were in Palau two months ago. The Compact calls for the United States to finance 50-plus miles of circumferential road construction on Babelthuap. Because Palau has not implemented the Compact, these road-construction funds are not yet available.

There are other ways, however, to accomplish the job. Owing to persistence by state officials on Babelthuap and the aid of the United States Navy Civic Action Team, there are roads being built there that connect remote areas with Koror. State governors often rank roads as a number-one priority and back that designation with dollars from their limited budgets. The states provide the direction and supplies for road-building, and the United States Navy Civic Action Team provides the expert manpower and equipment for actually preparing and placing the road material.

Paved roads exist in several of the Babelthuap states. Within the last two years, the United States Navy Civic Action Team aided in building a road from Airai to Aimeliik. The Visiting Mission witnessed road construction in

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progress in the state of Ngaremlengui. The road had been pushed as far as the river, and materials were needed for a bridge. Within one month after the visit, local officials solved the materials problem, and the Civic Action Team built the bridge and the connector road, which now allows access to Koror.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

Ms. GUERRA (Special Adviser): To add to what Ambassador Tahir-Kheli has just said, let me just say, that we in the Administering Authority definitely see roads as a top priority, because that is a very vital part of economic development, something we put much emphasis on for Palau.

In response to the concerns raised by the representative of the Russian Federation, I will touch on a couple of things. One is that last month we awarded a grant of $2.6 million for the improvement of deficiencies in roads, road repairs and the bridge in Babelthuap and Koror. This is money that had been appropriated in previous years but that was waiting for the request and the plans to come in. It is now moving forward, and perhaps before we finish with this subject, one of the representatives of Palau might want to provide further information on the construction schedule.

The subject of roads has also been addressed in our Operations and Maintenance Programme. This Programme, as part of our technical assistance programme, was implemented with about $12 million three years ago. The first phase consisted of hiring a team of experts and consultants who travelled to all the insular areas to conduct baseline evaluations on the infrastructure. These studies are already completed, and we are now into the implementation stages.

(Ms. Guerra, Special Adviser)

It does require the commitment of the local governments to match some of these funds. In some cases the process has slowed down in some areas of Palau, although grants have already been awarded to Palau for some of the studies in power and other infrastructures. We also have worked very closely with the Navy, which is headquartered in Guam, to make sure that we continue to provide Civic Action Teams. We all saw, when we were there and visited some of the outer islands, that the Seabees, as we call them, or the Civic Action Teams were actively working on some pioneering roads. We see these roads as critical, because while they are only pioneering roads they do provide access, and those are roads that can later be improved as traffic warrants. We have made it a point to remain in very close contact with the Commander of these Teams, to emphasize the importance of these people being there. The Team that was departing at the time of the Visiting Mission has now been replaced by a new Team. On a rotation basis, we should always expect to have a Team in place in Palau helping with the construction.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): I am very grateful to the representatives of the Administering Authority for the explanations they have given.

In posing my questions, I want to make the following point. In the replies of the Administering Authority to questions put on various issues with financial aspects, we often hear that that there are certain funds allotted under the Compact but that, since the Compact has not come into force, these funds cannot of course be used. I should like to mention that we are not talking now about what funds will be allotted under the Compact and what would be the development of the Territory after the Compact's entry into force; rather, what we are considering now is the situation as it actually exists:

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the Territory is still a Trust Territory, and the Administering Authority is stating that it fully assumes responsibility under the Trusteeship Agreement. This includes, of course, the need for development of the Territory and the expenses attendant upon such development. So what will be given to the Territory as a result of the Compact's entry into force is quite a different matter.

(Mr. Berezovsky, Russian Federation)

I mention this because it often takes us away from the point where we can get a true perspective of the Territory's development today.

On page 31 of the report reference is made to protection of natural resources. We read in paragraph 3 on that page that measures involving the release of pupae and larvae were not entirely successful; in paragraph 4, it is stated that

"biological and chemical control measures were discussed and demonstrated when possible."

Demonstrations and educational work are important, but protecting the crops is also important. I should like to know in more detail what effective measures are being taken in the Territory and to what extent they meet current needs and are up to the highest standards that the Administering Authority prescribes for the protection of the environment in the Territory and the preservation of its identity.

Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America): Assistant Secretary Stella Guerra will give an overall response, and then I would request that Mr. Uherbelau add something more specific as an input from the Palauan delegation.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

Ms. GUERRA (Special Adviser): Environmental concerns in Palau are extremely important to us, for many reasons. The Department of the Interior's mission is not only to protect the environment, but to balance development and environmental protection, and our Secretary has made it one of the top stewardship agenda items to leave our resources in better shape than we found

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them in. Our work in Palau as the Administering Authority has also focused on this point, and we do many things.

Our fish and wildlife people, who are part of the Department of the Interior, spend a great deal of time there working with the education system and the people responsible for agriculture to examine these resources as well as how best to protect them. As the entire Visiting Mission witnessed, we have launched a programme to protect an endangered species, the hawk-bill turtle.

I have no specific information on programmes that the Department of Agriculture might have in an ongoing form or through the Micronesian Occupational College, but perhaps some of the Palauan representatives can add to this discussion. We in the Department of the Interior feel that working with Palau, as well as education, plays a great role.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on Mr. Uherbelau.

Mr. UHERBELAU (Special Representative Adviser): I do not have a detailed answer to the question; we have been conferring amongst ourselves, and we do not know the answer. However, I should like to try to respond by saying that the Division of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Palau Community Action Agency and the Micronesian Occupational College, has come up with certain agricultural projects and requested assistance from the South Pacific Commission. Agricultural experts have been dispatched to Palau on a number of occasions to assist in the eradication of pests and plant diseases.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on Ms. Guerra.

Ms. GUERRA (Special Adviser): I have just been reminded of some of the technical assistance grants we have given this year and some that have been given in the past. Some of them have gone for the aerial photography of

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Palau and all of its environmental resources. This will also help in some of the research currently taking place. We have done the ecological assessment; the 1976 black-and-white aerial photographs have been completed and are now part of the fish and wildlife studies being done on the ecological assessment. There is also a grant for the consolidation of the conservation data for Palau. I have no more information on that. The Conservation Data Center plays a role in gathering some of the information on Palau.

Mr. EVANS (United Kingdom): Mr. President, as this is the first occasion that I have been able to address you during this session of the Trusteeship Council, I would like to congratulate you on your unanimous election to your post.

I have four short questions, which I would like to put together in an attempt to save some time. The first two concern the question of fisheries. In the report of the Administering Authority it is noted that there is a major problem in Palau with illegal fishing, in particular by fishermen from Indonesia. Given that Palau itself cannot enter into negotiations with Indonesia to try to solve this problem, I would like to know what the Administering Authority is doing about it. Linked to that, I would also welcome an indication of whether the Administering Authority has had negotiations or discussions with countries of the region on fisheries conservation.

On the question of land, the report of the Administering Authority says that 664 land disputes were adjudicated during the period of the report; 14,000 remain, 5,000 having been adjudicated previously. What extra technical assistance has been provided by the Department of the Interior in an attempt to speed up this process?

Finally, I note that in the section on health on page 75 of the report it is noted that the South Pacific Commission has not yet replied to the request from Palau for technical assistance in developing the five-year health plan. I would welcome an indication of the latest position on this.

Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America): I should like to attempt to answer at least the first part of those questions and then ask Assistant Secretary Stella Guerra, as well as John Becker, if they have something to add to my reply.

(Mrs. Tahir-Kheli, United States)

The United States has been assembling detailed information relating to the problem of illegal fishing by Indonesian fishermen, and we are preparing to enter into a dialogue with Indonesia on this matter. Now that the 49 Indonesians who were convicted in connection with illegal fishing have departed Palau, we believe that the atmosphere is more conducive to dealing with this matter in a constructive fashion with Indonesia.

As Assistant Secretary Guerra stated yesterday, a comprehensive report was recently issued by the Palau Division of Marine Resources and Conservation containing statistics on fish catches and marine resources. We will be mailing to the Council a copy of the report as soon as it is received in Washington.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Interior.

Ms. GUERRA (Special Adviser): Let me add that the Administering Authority recognizes that the people of Palau should be the beneficiaries of the resources that come from their surrounding waters. We are working to ensure that this will be the case. Yesterday I indicated that I would forward to the Council a report on the marine fisheries. Through technical assistance we have funded a marine biologist who is working with Palau and who has helped to prepare this report, which I think will answer many questions.

We have also cooperated with the legislature of Palau as it develops legislation creating fisheries management zones, and we are pleased that it has enacted such legislation. We are assisting in its implementation.

When the Visiting Mission was in Palau we were all made aware of the situation with the current Indonesian incident. Let me say that we have had numerous discussions as well on surveillance and are trying to see if there is

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a possibility of Palau, along with the state of Tobi, where the incident occurred, and the United States Coast Guard, acquiring an additional boat to aid in surveillance. Those discussions are ongoing.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation): Clearly, one of the most promising areas for the development of the Trust Territory of Palau is the development of fisheries and the fishing industry. The Visiting Mission that went to Palau noted this in its report. On page 40 of the report of the Administering Authority, where this question is dealt with, we read that on Koror certain changes have taken place in the marketing of fish. Comparative data are set forth, and we are told, in particular, that:

(spoke in English)

"nine fish marketing operations of varying sizes were active in Koror in 1982. This expanded to 17 in 1986 and only 9 were operational at the end of 1990."

(continued in Russian)

My question is: is this passage in the report pointing to certain negative changes? It is not clear what the reason for the changes is. Perhaps they could be due to organizational measures and do not indicate any particular shift in the development of fisheries. We do not know what this means, and we would be glad to have clarification as to what exactly is meant by the passage on page 40 of the report.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the Special Representative Adviser.

Mr. UHERBELAU (Special Representative Adviser): We can only speculate that, as the representative of the Russian Federation mentioned, there has been some consolidation of smaller market outlets in Koror. That is the only thing we can say about it.

Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America): I believe that there were some additional questions by the representative of the United Kingdom, on health and land issues, which did not get answered the last time around. We welcome this opportunity to answer them now.

Ms. GUERRA (Special Adviser): A question was raised on health, in reference to page 75 of the annual report.

On the basis of the latest information I have - and I have had a very brief discussion with other members of the delegation to see if there was any additional information - I can state that the Ministry of Health is currently working with the World Health Organization (WHO) in the development of a five-year plan. It is scheduled to conduct a workshop in August, when an assessment will be made of the capabilities within the Ministry of Health in Palau. They will also be identifying and compiling all of the information needed to formalize this plan. It is expected that the plan will be finalized towards the end of the year - some time in late October or in November. Hopefully, the plan will be put into place for implementation early in 1993.

Another question posed by the representative of the United Kingdom related to the matter of the land issues in Palau.

We in the Administering Authority feel that adjudication of the land issues is the prerogative of the Government of Palau. Therefore, the Special Representative from Palau might be more qualified to respond. But let me just say that my office, the Department of the Interior, in its effort to expedite the processing of these land issues, recently issued a grant of $185,000 to begin surveying the land. Hopefully, this will be of some assistance.

Mr. UHERBELAU (Special Representative Adviser): In addition to the technical assistance extended by the Department of the Interior to the

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judiciary in the matter of the settlement of land disputes, two geographers - William Ball and Jon Abrams - from the Bureau of Land Management of the Department of the Interior came to Palau to assist us in determining the coordinates necessary to draw up official maps and charts for the 200-mile exclusive economic zone of the Republic. As the Council may be aware, Palau shares common boundaries with the Federated States of Micronesia, with the Philippines and with Indonesia.

We wish to tell the Trusteeship Council that we are grateful to the Administering Authority for this assistance.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): At the beginning of this session of the Council, the representative of Palau said that there was a critical situation with regard to the Aimeliik Power Plant. He referred to the need for resources to make possible an overhaul of this power plant.

While the Visiting Mission was in Palau, we had a chance to visit the power plant. It is quite an impressive piece of engineering. It would be a pity if a power plant so important to the people of Palau were to fall on hard times as a result of a shortage of funds to repair it.

At the same time, we read on page 41 of the Administering Authority's report that

(spoke in English)

"The United States Department of the Interior Operations and Maintenance Improvement Program (OMIP) has granted Palau $396,000 on a

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matching basis for Aimeliik Power Plant repairs. The grant is conditioned on the establishment of an autonomous public utility corporation."

(spoke in Russian)

We should like to establish a relationship between these data contained in the report and the most recent statement by the representative of Palau concerning the vital need for resources to keep Palau supplied with electric power. Is the report referring to resources that have already been used? What has happened to those funds? Why has the issue of a shortage of funds for repairing the Aimeliik Power Plant come up now?

Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America): Some of the points just raised were addressed by us just a little while ago, but we can readdress the issue.

Ms. GUERRA (Special Adviser): A little earlier I talked about the Operations and Maintenance Improvement Program, which is our plan for addressing the infrastructure needs in the insular areas on a long-term basis. As I said, these projects require some kind of matches from the Government - often in-kind matches. But we feel very strongly that putting the capability for operation and for maintenance back into the insular areas is extremely important.

The President's budget for 1993 - and I am talking about the United States Federal budget - contains an additional $3 million for this programme, in which Palau will also share. This is in addition to our technical assistance programme.

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In January 1991, Palau received the first two grants from the Maintenance Assistance Fund under this programme, for an on-site engineer to assist in capital improvement projects and programmes and in operation and maintenance oversight, and for a condition-inventory assessment to be done of the Aimeliik power plant. Since then, Palau has received an additional $600,000 in grants that have gone for the start-up costs of a public utility corporation that will assist in overhauling the Aimeliik and Malakal power plants and for funding for the water system, metering, leak detection and billing.

I understand that legislation has been introduced or proposed, but I do not think it has been finalized; perhaps Mr. Uherbelau can add something here.

Establishing this autonomous corporation for power is seen as one of the conditions for Palau to have some cost recovery for this power plant, and for tying it all into the studies that will get the power plant up to its full potential.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the Special Representative Adviser.

Mr. UHERBELAU (Special Representative Adviser): As we stated in our opening statement, the overhaul and repair of the generators at Aimeliik is a matter of urgency; the funds that are needed to do this work should not be tied up or made contingent upon the establishment of a public utility commission. This matter is one of policy, which is under review by the government, and legislation is being considered by the national Congress. What we had requested was that the necessary funding for needed repairs not be tied up until the law was enacted.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): I am grateful for those explanations, which considerably clarify the current situation with respect to the electrification of the Territory.

I now have a more general question which, however, directly bears on the development of the Territory today and in the future. My question relates to the preparation of a national master development plan for the Territory. There is a great deal about this in the report of the Administering Authority, and we on the Visiting Mission heard quite a lot about it during our stay in the Territory.

It would clearly be of interest to learn how long the plan will be in preparation. When is it proposed to put the plan into effect? Why am I asking this question? It is because the Trusteeship Council is interested first and foremost in the situation with regard to the development of the Territory at present. We have seen the status of the process in all spheres of activity, but in this case the question also arises of how the preparation of a master development plan for the Territory - oriented in principle towards future development - affects existing projects. How are such projects integrated into the master plan under preparation? To what extent are the two processes proceeding side by side, without interfering with one another?

Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America): We would like to attempt to answer the question about the master plan, as well as some of the trends just mentioned by our colleague from the Russian Federation. I think the Visiting Mission noted the fact that Palau has been making great progress in developing its most promising industries: fishing and tourism. We know that fresh tuna is now being flown directly from Palau to Japan. Tourist arrivals have also been increasing at roughly 20 per cent annually for several

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years, with the exception of 1991, when Japanese travel was affected by the Gulf war. It seems that the travel numbers have gone up again rapidly in 1992.

The major task of the Government of Palau will be both to encourage investment and to maintain growth, while protecting Palau's environment and culture. Palau must also increase the benefits from economic growth that flow to the people. These tasks are to be dealt with by Palau in the Palau national master development plan soon to be under way. The plan would be funded jointly by the United States Department of the Interior and the United Nations Development Programme. I believe this is all in a very active stage right at this moment.

I would request that Assistant Secretary Stella Guerra elaborate on this point.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on Ms. Guerra.

Ms. GUERRA (Special Adviser): Let me add to the statement that was made and to the response to the questions that were raised. It was in September 1990, while we were having consultations on the Secretary's Order, that the issue of a master plan was raised by the Palauan delegation. After much discussion, the Administering Authority agreed that we would like to see a master plan and that we would work with Palau to put one in place. Since then we have had numerous meetings, bringing in the Corps of Engineers and a group from Palau selected by the leadership, as well as experts and members from the Department of the Interior and other areas of the Federal Government, to discuss how to write a master plan and how best to implement it.

(Ms. Guerra, Special Adviser)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been an integral part of this, and it has also played a major role in these meetings. At this point, we now have the scope of work and an agreement, which was discussed during the last trip with the President and the leadership of Palau. We are basically in agreement.

Today, some of my staff members are meeting with UNDP, which for its part will take action on this plan. Thus, we expect the plan to be ready in the next couple of months, I hope, to begin the implementation process. This is definitely a collaborative effort. We see a plan like this being Palau's plan, and therefore there has to be a commitment on the part of Palau, as we would hope that it will become not just a plan that will be collecting dust on the shelf, but one that is viable for Palau.

The United States is very concerned about the culture and environment of Palau needing protection. But we feel that the decisions in managing its environment, as well as the growth in the tourist industry, must be made by the people of Palau. The plan is now in the final approval stages, and we hope that it will see the light of day in the very near future. The plan will also address ways of raising revenues to pay for some of these infrastructure needs or other apsects of the viable master plan.

There was also a question raised about current construction projects and what happens to them. I wrote to President Etpison in reference to, for example, the proposed airport that was being discussed. Do these projects have to wait until a master plan is completed? My response at the time - and it remains the same now - was "no". These projects can continue to move along their own track, although they do need to go under the same approval process that is set forward in the Secretary's Order.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): If there are no further questions, I suggest that we continue consideration of this item at our next meeting.

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO PALAU, TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, MARCH 1992 (T/1964) (continued)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): If there are no comments on this item at this time, I suggest that the Council continue its consideration at its next meeting tomorrow, when we shall take a decision on the report.

COOPERATION WITH THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 2106 B (XX) AND 46/83)

SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 3057 (XXVIII) AND 46/85)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): As members will recall, at its last meeting the Council decided to consider agenda items 9 and 10 jointly. I understand that the Secretariat has provided each delegation with the relevant documentation and, in particular, resolutions 46/83 and 46/85, adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session in 1991.

Does any member wish to comment on these items?

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): The role of the United Nations in matters relating to human rights is well known. The authority of the United Nations in this area is extremely high. Over many years, the United Nations has been the centre for coordinating the efforts of the international community on questions of combating racism and racial discrimination. In accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies, there is interaction and cooperation between these bodies in implementing programmes aimed at respect

(Mr. Berezovsky, Russian Federation)

for human rights and the elimination of racial discrimination. This cooperation is also presupposed on the part of the Trusteeship Council.

The delegation of the Russian Federation very much regrets that, in spite of the fact that cooperation between the Trusteeship Council and the other organs has been required for many years now, good will in this cooperation on the part of the Trusteeship Council has not yet been demonstrated. We believe that cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination should have been established, particularly because this would not have required any additional or extraordinary effort from the Trusteeship Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): If there are no further comments, and if there is no objection, I suggest that the Council decide to take note of the statement made at this meeting and conclude consideration of these items.

It was so decided.

ATTAINMENT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT OR INDEPENDENCE BY THE TRUST TERRITORIES (TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1369 (XVII) AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1413 (XIV)) AND THE SITUATION IN TRUST TERRITORIES WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 1514 (XV) AND 46/71)

COOPERATION WITH THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1654 (XVI))

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): As members will recall, at its last meeting the Council decided to consider agenda items 11 and 12 jointly. In this regard, the Secretariat has provided each delegation with resolution 46/71, adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session in 1991.

Does any member wish to comment on agenda items 11 and 12?

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): The delegation of the Russian Federation, as in the previous cases, would like to register its opinion that cooperation and interaction between the Trusteeship Council and the United Nations Committee on decolonization is necessary, and that this cooperation would benefit both the Trusteeship Council, which enjoys tremendous expert knowledge and experience, and the Committee on decolonization.

At the Trusteeship Council's last session, the President quite rightly pointed out that certain steps towards cooperation have already been taken. We have a common secretariat, and I note with tremendous satisfaction that Ambassador Lohia is participating in the work of the current session, as he did in the Visiting Mission, perhaps not as the official Chairman of the Committee of 24 but nevertheless as the representative of his country, Papua New Guinea. I also note with great satisfaction his presence here among us today. I hope that in the future, too, cooperation between our two organs will continue.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I call on the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): Since this is the first time I have spoken at this session of the Council, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election, and the Vice-President, who has done a tremendous job for the Council. Having known you, Mr. President, through our visit to Palau, I am confident that the work you will lead in the Council will result in positive and constructive solutions to the question of Palau.

I had not intended to speak now, but a reference has been made to me and to Papua New Guinea's participation as a member country within the region which was invited to participate, though not as Chairman of the Special Committee of 24. However, I welcome the gesture that has been made, and as Chairman of the Special Committee I should like very much to encourage closer cooperation between the Council and the Special Committee, and also the Fourth Committee, particularly since some members are the administering Powers of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

It is vital that we have a partnership in the campaign for the total eradication of colonialism. Those who have colonized and those who have been colonised will have to work out a way in which liberation from colonial status is achieved.

I wish also to point out that the General Assembly Declaration on the eradication of colonialism and its programme of action to achieve that purpose by the year 2000 include, in my view, the question of Palau. That gives all the more reason for cooperation between the United Nations organs dealing with these issues.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

In order to encourage such cooperation I suggest that in the future the Chairman of the Special Committee should be requested to address the Council in that capacity, especially when this item is taken up. I hope that the Council will give some consideration to that request.

I wish to speak later on the question of the Visiting Mission's report and on the report of the Administering Authority. I hope that the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia, who is arriving tonight, will be given the opportunity to participate tomorrow, which is doubtful, or on Monday.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Council has taken note of those proposals.

If there are no other comments, the Council will take a decision on these items following the adoption of its conclusions and recommendations.

It was so decided.

APPOINTMENT OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): As agreed in our informal consultations, the Council will now proceed to the nomination of the members of the Drafting Committee. I propose that the Committee be composed of the representatives of the China, France, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I remind members that, in accordance with an earlier decision of the Council, the Drafting Committee will be chaired by the Vice-President of the Council, the representative of the United Kingdom. The Committee will hold its first meeting, an informal meeting, this afternoon, it being understood that the Committee's official work will begin after the end of the general debate.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): At tomorrow morning's meeting the Council will continue its consideration of items 4, 5, 11 and 12.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

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Fifty-ninth session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1694th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 29 May 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. FELIX-PAGANON (France)

- Examination of the annual report of the Administrative Authority for the year ended 30 September 1991: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (continued)

- Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, March 1992 (continued)

- Organization of work

This record is subject to correction.

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

EXAMINATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1991: TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/1962) (continued)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Does any member wish to put questions to the representatives of the Administering Authority at this time? Since that does not appear to be the case, I suggest that we continue consideration of the item at our next meeting.

The Council will now begin the general debate.

Mr. ZHANG Yan (China) (interpretation from Chinese): It gives me great pleasure to speak during the general debate of the fifty-ninth session of the United Nations Trusteeship Council. Since the beginning of the current session, the Chinese delegation has actively participated in various activities of the Council. We will continue to work with other members of the Council for positive results at this session.

According to the United Nations Charter, the principal task of the international trusteeship system is aimed at furthering international peace and security and promoting the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of Trust Territories and their progressive development towards self-government or independence. We are glad to note that, thanks to the protracted efforts made by the people in the Trust Territories and the international community, including the United Nations, the majority of Trust Territories have terminated, one after another, their trusteeship and become independent members of the international community. In the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands have also brought their trusteeship to an end in accordance with Security Council

(Mr. Zhang Yan, China)

resolution 683 (1990). At present, Palau is the only entity of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands that remains under the United Nations trusteeship system. Its political status remains an outstanding issue.

According to resolution 2194 (S-XXI) adopted by the United Nations Trusteeship Council on 19 December 1991, and upon the invitation of the Administering Authority, the Trusteeship Council dispatched a visiting mission to Palau in March this year. China also had its representative on the Mission. Through their contacts with people from all walks of life in Palau during their visit and inspection, members of the Visiting Mission saw with their own eyes the current state of affairs and the problems existing in the political, economic and social development in Palau and achieved a better understanding of the demands and aspirations of the Palau people for self-determination and economic and cultural development. The report submitted by the Mission to the current Council session contains a detailed account of this visit, as well as useful recommendations and ideas advanced by the Mission. We hope that this visit will have a positive impact on accelerating the process of self-determination in Palau.

(Mr. Zhang Yan, China)

In the past few days, the Council has considered the report prepared by the Administering Authority on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and heard the statements made by the Council members, the Administering Authority and the representative of Palau, as well as the petitioners. We feel that this has not only helped us better understand the situation of the Trust Territory, but also contributed to the comprehensive and correct implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement.

Although the people in the Trust Territory have made some discernible progress in the political, economic and social fields, we note that some reasonable demands and aspirations of the people in the Trust Territory have yet to be met; there are still some issues between the Trust Territory and the Administering Authority that demand a prompt solution. We hope the parties concerned will act in accordance with the Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement and seek appropriate solutions through consultations so as to facilitate the political, economic and social advancement of the people of this Trust Territory.

The Chinese Government has always supported the people of the Trust Territory in their desire for national self-determination and independence. We therefore respect the choice the people of Palau made of their own free will, in conformity with their national interest, over their future political status. In our view, the political future of Palau should be decided by the Palauans themselves. The Chinese delegation also holds that the Administering Authority should, before termination of the trusteeship in Palau, adopt practical measures, fulfil its obligations towards the Trust Territory and meet the just aspirations and demands of the people in the Trust Territory so

(Mr. Zhang Yan, China)

as to create the necessary conditions for the early realization of self-determination and independent development in Palau.

Mr. LACROIX (France)(interpretation from French): On behalf of my delegation I should like, Sir, to congratulate you on your unanimous election to preside over the Council. I need hardly say how pleased we are to see you guiding our work this year, during this fifty-ninth session. Allow me also to welcome the delegation from Palau, whose participation makes, as it does every year, a very useful contribution to the smooth functioning of our work.

The Trusteeship Council has begun its present session in a new context: two of the entities that, a few years ago, still made up the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands - the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia - are now full Members of the United Nations, after their populations chose independence. Another Territory, the Northern Marianas, which two years ago still came under the jurisdiction of our Council, has also obtained new status in accordance with the will expressed by its population.

The trusteeship regime now applies only to Palau. As statements preceding my delegation's show, everyone realizes the urgency of putting an end to this situation, which the present context no longer justifies and which does not correspond to the wishes of the Palauans.

It is therefore important that Palau swiftly adopt a new status in accordance with the wishes of its population, in order to continue its economic and social development on a stable institutional basis. We have noted that discussions have been continuing between the Administering Authority and the authorities of Palau in order to overcome the difficulties, particularly of an institutional nature, that have been hindering the

(Mr. Lacroix, France)

achievement of this goal. My delegation hopes that these discussions will lead to an early solution. We feel that it is essential to the future of Palau that there be an end to the uncertainty surrounding its status.

Of course, it is not for our Council to express its views on the future institutions of Palau; that is up to that Territory's population. Allow us, however, to suggest that if the Compact of Free Association is not achievable, all other options should be examined.

Pending the removal of the trusteeship from Palau, the Administering Authority must continue to fulfil the obligations incumbent upon it. My delegation has noted with satisfaction this year the assurances given by the delegation of the United States on this point.

We are pleased that the Trusteeship Council was able, this year, to observe directly the situation in Palau, thanks to the Visiting Mission it sent in March. I take this opportunity to express our thanks to the Palauan authorities for the welcome and cooperation it extended to the Mission. My delegation studied with great interest the information contained in the Mission's report regarding both the Territory's status and its socio-economic situation.

In that connection, the information contained in the report, together with the material customarily provided to us every year by the Administering Authority, shows that tangible progress has been achieved. We noted in particular that the development of the tourism sector in the archipelago is continuing steadily, and that the performance of the fishing industry, regarding which various initiatives have been taken by the authorities of Palau, is very encouraging. We also noted with interest that the construction of a new hospital in Koror is almost finished.

(Mr. Lacroix, France)

My delegation is aware, however, that difficulties continue despite the aforementioned progress and, more generally, despite the positive results achieved in the Territory regarding the democratic nature of those institutions and the standard of living of the population. These difficulties, which have been noted in the Visiting Mission's report and mentioned by the petitioner, are sources of legitimate concern for Palauans. We have noted in particular the concerns expressed regarding the need for environmental protection of the archipelago, and the continuation of illegal fishing in the territorial waters of Palau.

My delegation expresses the hope that these difficulties will continue to be the subject of talks between the Palauan authorities and the Administering Authority. We hope the same will apply to the Territory's budgetary problems.

My delegation fully agrees with the observation made in the Visiting Mission's report, namely that the present status of Palau no longer matches the degree of political, economic and social maturity it has achieved. We feel that efforts undertaken to put an end to its status must be actively pursued so that Palau can accede as soon as possible to a new status chosen by its population.

I will conclude by expressing my thanks to the representatives of the Secretariat, whose dedication, efficiency and competence this year again have contributed to the smooth functioning of our work.

Mr. EVANS (United Kingdom): The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has consistently supported the efforts of the people of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to achieve whatever form of self-government meets their wishes and their particular circumstances. That is why we supported the adoption of Trusteeship Council

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resolution 2183 (LIII) in 1986, by which the Council recognized that the peoples of Micronesia had freely exercized their right to self-determination, and had chosen either free association with the United States or Commonwealth status. Likewise, we voted for Security Council resolution 683 (1990). We also co-sponsored General Assembly resolutions 46/2 and 46/3 on admission to membership of the United Nations of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. We hope that it will not be too long before we are able to perform a similar pleasurable duty in respect of Palau.

(Mr. Evans, United Kingdom)

We have listened with great interest to the statements of the representatives of the Administering Authority, in particular Assistant Secretary of the Interior Stella Guerra; to the representatives of Palau, particularly the Honourable Santos Olikong, Minister of State; to the petitioner; and of course to our colleagues in the Trusteeship Council. We are fortunate in being able this year to study not only the annual report of the Administering Authority but also the report of the Visiting Mission, which for the first time comprised representatives from all the members of the Trusteeship Council.

The Chairman of the Visiting Mission, in his statement before the Trusteeship Council on 26 May, referred to the evident sense of frustration in Palau about the impasse over Palau's future political status. The trusteeship was never designed to last forever; it is not in the interest of the people of Palau that it should do so. As Ambassador Tahir-Kheli said in her opening statement, the Security Council did not intend when it created the trusteeship in 1947 that it would still be in existence into the last decade of the twentieth century. We believe that the United States, as Administering Authority, has done its best to fulfil its obligations under the trusteeship and has been generous with its assistance and guidance to Palau over the past 40 or so years. The Compact of Free Association has been clearly favoured not just by the Administering Authority but also by the majority of Palauans in every plebiscite to date; support for it has never fallen below 60 per cent. We have heard with interest of the proposal by Palau for a referendum in the near future on a constitutional amendment to allow the Compact to be approved by a simple majority of the electorate, which would be followed by another referendum on the Compact. We hope that, whichever course of action Palauans

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choose to take, early progress can be made on resolving the current impasse so that, as the Honourable Minister of State said in his opening statement, the trusteeship can be terminated within the next year.

In our statement to the Trusteeship Council last year my delegation said that we believed that Secretary's Order 3142 was necessary in order for the Administering Authority to fulfil its obligations to the Trust Territory. That remains our view. We have however noted that in its report the Visiting Mission indicated that it had encountered a great deal of criticism about the impact of the Order. These criticisms have been repeated to the Council by the Honourable Minister of State. It is clear that it is crucial for Palau now, and in the future, to ensure that it meets its financial responsibilities. Without this commitment Palau cannot hope to attract international capital and investment which, as we know from the experience of our dependent territories, is so vital to any emerging economy. We are, however, reassured by the statement in the Council on 27 May by the Assistant Secretary of State that following recent discussions between Palau and the Administering Authority the stage has been set for improved budget management. Of particular importance were her statements that the budget-suspension provision will probably soon begin to fade away, and that capital projects such as certain road-construction schemes may shortly resume. The poor state of Palau's roads was of course noted in both the Administering Authority's annual report and the report of the Visiting Mission. Particularly welcome therefore is the grant of $2.6 million for bridge and road repairs which was announced to the Council by the Assistant Secretary.

(Mr. Evans, United Kingdom)

Much of the reports of both the Administering Authority and the Visiting Mission was devoted to questions of economic and social development. There is much that is welcome, including continued progress in the development of the Palauan fisheries industry. This provides a much-needed source of revenue to an economy which is overly reliant on grants from the Administering Authority, and where levels of pay and staffing in the public sector need to be kept under careful control. As we know also from the experience of the United Kingdom's dependent territories, revenue from licensing arrangements, the establishment of fisheries-related enterprises and the development of an expanding export industry can do a great deal to provide much-needed employment and revenue. However, the illegal activities of foreign fishing vessels, poaching in Palauan waters, are clearly cause for concern. In this respect we hope that the Administering Authority will take note of the suggestion in paragraph 125 of the report of the Visiting Mission. Finally, on fisheries we were pleased to note that action has been taken to improve the quantity and quality of information on catches, information which is vital for the proper management of Palau's fisheries resources.

Tourism continues to be of major importance to the Palauan economy. Palau appears to have suffered less than most from the world-wide reduction in tourism as a result of the Gulf War and the subsequent recession. As noted by the Visiting Mission, Palau has the potential to become a major tourist destination, and further communications and infrastructure improvements, and perhaps some provision for tourist-industry staff training in the master plan, will help towards the achievement of this goal. But Palau's attraction for tourists stems from its natural beauty. We hope that the Government of Palau

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will ensure that the growth of tourism does not lead to a degradation of Palau's natural environment.

We are particularly pleased at the progress reported in the social field. The progress towards completion of the new hospital is certainly most welcome and we look forward to its opening, as envisaged, at the end of this year. I should also like to refer to the action being taken by the Administering Authority and the Palauan Government on the question of drugs. The Anti-Substance-Abuse Programme is clearly making an important contribution in this field and we commend the robust action taken recently by the various United States agencies and the Palauan authorities in Peleliu to confiscate and destroy marijuana plants. We very much share the views of the Palauan authorities that supply and demand for drugs must be tackled together.

Finally, I should like to reiterate our view that Palau is ready for self-government, as the Palauan people themselves have amply demonstrated. We promise the people of Palau our support in their efforts to determine at the earliest possible date a future political status which fully accords with their wishes. The Honourable Minister of State has said that he wishes to be the last representative of Palau to report under the trusteeship relationship. I can only hope that I shall be the last representative of the United Kingdom to make such a statement in this Council.

Before I conclude, I should like to raise one other point - I am, of course, prepared, if the President so rules, to raise it under any other agenda item.

I have in mind the question of General Assembly resolution 46/190, adopted on 20 December 1991 and entitled "Pattern of conferences". In paragraph 14 of that resolution, the Assembly invites the Trusteeship Council

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to review its meeting requirements. This refers back to document A/46/32, "Report of the Committee on Conferences", issued during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In this document it is stated that the Trusteeship Council and its drafting committees will be allocated four weeks of conference time in May next year, for its sixtieth session.

That is clearly unrealistic and I would hope that the Secretariat would be encouraged to take such action as is necessary to amend this allocation.

Mr. LACROIX (France) (interpretation from French): I wish simply to state that my delegation supports what was said just now by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the timetable of meetings for the next session of the Trusteeship Council.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): In these times of radical change in the world, affecting all States and peoples, the existence of a Territory under colonial dependence and trusteeship is strikingly anachronistic. Today the Trusteeship Council is considering the situation in one such Territory, the last under the International Trusteeship System - that is, the situation in Palau.

My delegation understands the feelings of the people of Palau, which have been expressed to the members of the Trusteeship Council as well as to the members of the Visiting Mission during their visit to Palau. The members of the Visiting Mission have stressed that the people of this Trust Territory have outgrown the status of trustees and are seeking the earliest possible solution to the question of their Territory's future political status.

(Mr. Berezovsky, Russian Federation)

We also understand the problems and difficulties that face Palau as it moves towards that new status. In addition to the annual report of the Administering Authority, at this session of the Trusteeship Council we have been given additional and extremely detailed information on the political, economic and social situation in Palau that was gathered locally by the United Nations Visiting Mission. Indeed, the Visiting Mission's conclusions, views and recommendations are important and should be taken into account by both the Administering Authority and by the Council itself in its further work and in preparing its report to the Security Council.

Without going into a detailed account of the problems of the Trust Territory - since those are sufficiently reflected in the documents submitted to this session - we should like to note that, notwithstanding the efforts made by the Administering Authority, as well as those of the local authorities in Palau, to achieve economic and social progress, the principal problems remain those of financial independence, external indebtedness, insufficiently developed industry, a lack of suitable and sufficient infrastructure and capital funding, a low level of electrification in the Territory, insufficient medical services and so on. These are also mentioned in the report of the Visiting Mission to Palau.

It is clear that the obligations of the United States under the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement and the United Nations Charter are still in force and will continue to be in force until the population of Palau is able to exercise its right to self-determination on the basis of a free expression of its will and the subsequent appropriate decision by the Security Council. The Administering Authority's oft-repeated determination - which it has reiterated at this session - to follow this path unswervingly testifies to its responsible

(Mr. Berezovsky, Russian Federation)

approach to achieving the goals of its trusteeship. In light of that, it is important that the complex efforts being made by the Administering Authority to work out an overall plan for the future development of the Territory should also take into account existing programmes for economic development. In this connection we should like to express our satisfaction at the statement by the representative of the United States, Ms. Stella Guerra, in the meeting of 27 May, with regard to the Administering Authority's plans to promote and assist several such programmes.

Among the problems requiring solution with which Palau is faced, the main problem involves the question of that Territory's future political status. This is the central question, and one that is of great concern to the population of Palau, to the Trusteeship Council and to the international community as a whole. The people of Palau themselves must find a solution to that question. There is no doubt that the United Nations and the Administering Authority must assist them in finding that solution and in achieving the goals of trusteeship so that the people of Palau are provided with all the means necessary to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and free choice in free elections in accordance with the United Nations Charter, the Trusteeship Agreement and the Declaration on decolonization.

In building a new world order based on the primacy of right and human values, the transition from relations based on conflict to those based on cooperation and partnership includes a review of global military doctrines. In this connection the Russian delegation regards as very promising the assurances given by the United States to both the Trusteeship Council and the Security Council that it has no plans to position military bases in Palau.

(Mr. Berezovsky, Russian Federation)

Those assurances are in keeping with the need to reduce foreign presence there and will also promote the development of overall cooperation in the region.

The Russian delegation is in favour of the full implementation of the goals of trusteeship with regard to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and Palau. We support that people's inalienable right to self-determination, free choice of status under the Trusteeship Agreement and the Declaration on decolonization. That is my country's position. I would express the hope that the present session of the Trusteeship Council will promote social and economic progress in Palau and bring the Territory nearer to determining its future political status on the basis of the free expression of the will of its people.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Perhaps I should now turn briefly to the comments of the representative of the United Kingdom and supported by the representative of France with regard to the organization of the Council's session next year. If there are no further comments on this point -

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): Although it does not relate to the general debate on the situation in the Trust Territory, I too would like to raise a question. Of course, the bodies of the United Nations must be concerned about the more rational use of the means, time and resources of the Organization. I understand that the question will be raised at the appropriate time. However, it seems to me that to determine now some kind of time-frame for the Trusteeship Council's session next year, when it is very hard for us to predict the evolution of events in the Trust Territory and when the Council is still engaged in consideration of the situation there, is unjustified.

(Mr. Berezovsky, Russian Federation)

Let us look at the real state of affairs. We know that last year the Trusteeship Council session was allotted four weeks. However, the session concluded much more quickly. At that time, no damage occurred to the interests of the Organization or, above all, to the work of a major Charter body of the United Nations. No harm was done. The same thing may occur at this session. We planned a session of four weeks but we shall finish in a week and a half, and that would be without prejudice to the work. The Organization can only gain from this. Therefore, it seems to me that to establish some kind of rigid time-frame which might perhaps limit the work of the Trusteeship Council without knowing in advance what might take place, while not necessarily being dangerous would not really be justifiable.

Therefore, it seems to me that, while the question raised by the representative of the United Kingdom is correct in principle and will be taken into account in the future work of the Council at the next session, the Council must also take into account the need for the rational use of the resources and time of the United Nations.

Mr. EVANS (United Kingdom): I do not want to take up too much of the Council's time on this matter. I would simply, however, like to clarify that what I was referring to was in no sense any attempt to curtail the work of this Council, but simply to point out, as we were requested to do by the Fifth Committee, that as it stands the meetings' requirement as listed by the United Nations Secretariat for this Council next year bears no relationship to the reality of the time actually taken up by the Council in its meetings over the past couple of years. Certainly this year we shall be meeting for six or seven days. It seems rather strange that we are asking the Conference Services of the United Nations to allot to us four weeks.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I believe that we could legitimately return to this question when we consider what kind of recommendation we shall make to the Secretariat. We can recommend to the Secretariat that due note be taken of the statements made at the end of our meeting on Monday when we shall come to the consideration of our future work.

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO PALAU, TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, MARCH 1992 (T/1964, T/L.1282) (continued)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to draw the attention of members to the draft resolution contained in document T/L.1282.

I now call on the representative of Papua New Guinea, who wishes to speak on this agenda item.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Council once again and also the Administering Authority for having involved the Government of Papua New Guinea in the consideration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands for quite some time now. My Government is committed to ensuring that the wishes of the peoples of the Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories will be taken as the paramount considerations of this body and other related bodies that deal with Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. This commitment is known to the international community.

I wish also to express the thanks of my Government to the President and the Government of Palau for the welcome opportunities they have given us during these various visiting missions in which Papua New Guinea participated. We have become better acquainted with the people and their problems, and having visited Palau in person with the Council's recent Visiting Mission, I can testify that we have much in common culturally,

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socially and also in terms of the aspirations of the people. The people of the Pacific Islands have always been independent. It is only at the time of contact with the outside world that even the learned people wrote in various books and in their literature that we were recently discovered and therefore that our history began then. Our cultures and traditions and those of the people of Palau have been there for centuries. They are noble traditions and should therefore be honoured by the international community.

My Government wholeheartedly supports the report of the Visiting Mission to Palau, including its conclusions and recommendations. We also note that the Administering Authority has explained to my delegation that, in supporting the report, its conclusions and recommendations were also approved.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

It is on that basis that my Government will continue to observe and monitor developments in the Territory.

I should like to make a number of comments about some specific issues. As a result of my observations and those of many of my colleagues over a number of visiting missions, we continue to conclude that, sadly, there is hardly any economic development in Palau. Having had the opportunity to see the situation over more than 40 years, we have found no plan by the Administering Authority for the Territory's economic development. We shall therefore find it difficult if the Council or the Administering Authority should insist on a master plan to be the basis of economic development in the Territory. Master plans are very difficult to come by. I hope that a master plan will not hinder projects approved by the authorities of Palau for its economic and social development.

Infrastructures needed for economic and social development are also limited. This is noted in the reports of the Administering Authority and of the Visiting Mission. Without roads it would be very difficult for people in the outer islands to enjoy the hospital facilities in Koror, and it would be difficult for fishermen and women from the outer islands to enjoy the markets in Koror. We hope that the plans and financial support which now seem to be in place will encourage those very important facilities to be provided in order to help all the people of Palau.

It is also my delegation's view that Palau's political future has not been well thought out in the sense of all the options having been offered to the people of Palau. I believe that a Compact of Free Association produced in consultation with the people of Palau is the only option to have been offered; only lately do we hear that independence is available. However, the

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

suggestion of independence being available to the people of Palau has some stigma attached to it, in our opinion. It is probably the view of some people that independence will be bad for the people of Palau and therefore they should not go for it. Therefore, we have been told formally and informally that the only viable option is the Compact of Free Association. Such kinds of pressure lead us to conclude that the inalienable rights of the people of Palau have not been respected.

As many Council members have stated, the decision on political status and the right to make that decision should remain with the people of Palau, and we, the members of the international community, including the Administering Authority, should assist the leaders and the people to make a choice that is important to them. However, the choice must remain with the people of Palau. If the Compact of Free Association is what they choose, that is their right.

We believe the people of Palau have already opted for that, but a number of issues included in the Compact of Free Association make it difficult for the people of Palau to enjoy their rights. I refer to the nuclear and military provisions in the Constitution. The authorities and the people of Palau have humbly requested the Administering Authority to consider these issues separately from the Compact of Free Association. I believe that is an honourable request, and my delegation is not satisfied with the negative response given by the Administering Authority.

The nuclear provision in the Constitution is in accord with the South Pacific Nuclear-free Zone Treaty. Therefore, I believe that all the members of the South Pacific Forum support that nuclear provision. Accordingly, if it is the major stumbling-block to implementing the Compact of Free Association, I believe the Administering Authority should give positive consideration to

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allowing the people of Palau to enjoy the decision that they have rightly taken.

With regard to the military provision, I believe it is not difficult for countries with the capability in this area to function from any part of the world; military technology makes this possible for anyone, as was demonstrated in relation to the situation in Kuwait. If the international community is to defend the constitutional rights of the people of Kuwait, I believe the Constitution of Palau should be respected in the same way. If the insistence on including nuclear and military provisions reflects an intention to erode the Constitution of Palau, I believe it is contrary to international law and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

My delegation and our Government and people have a very positive relationship with the Administering Authority. We shall continue in that partnership to ensure that the "aquatic continent" of the Pacific and the extended family that we enjoy in our traditions includes the United States, France and Britain because of their sovereign presence in the region.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

We shall continue to support the work of the Council and the deliberations on Palau, the last entity of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. We hope that we can reach a final and positive conclusion on this matter as soon as possible. Once again, my delegation and I would like to thank the Council for having given us the opportunity to obtain firsthand knowledge of the situation in Palau. We also endorse the introductory remarks made by the Vice-President - the leader of the Mission to Palau - regarding the Visiting Mission's report.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Since there are no further speakers on the report, I now call on the representative of the United Kingdom to introduce the draft resolution contained in document T/L.1282.

Mr. EVANS (United Kingdom): As members of the Council can see, document T/L.1282, a draft resolution on the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1992, is a short document. It is sponsored by China, France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to an omission in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution. In the second line, the words "the report of" should be inserted after the words "conclusions and observations of". The new operative paragraph 3 would therefore read as follows:

"Decides that it will continue to take the recommendations, conclusions and observations of the report of the Visiting Mission into account in future examination of matters relating to the Trust Territory."

(Mr. Evans, United Kingdom)

I understand that that oral amendment is acceptable to all the sponsors, and I therefore move the adoption of the draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): It is my understanding that the members of the Council are prepared to waive rule 57 of the rules of procedure of the Council, which specifies that draft reports and draft resolutions should be circulated to the members 24 hours in advance of the meeting at which they are to be considered. If there are no objections, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): If there are no other comments, I shall take it that the Council decides to adopt draft resolution T/L.1282, as orally amended, without a vote.

Draft resolution T/L.1282, as orally amended, was adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Council has thus concluded its consideration of the report of the Visiting Mission to Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and of agenda item 5.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Before adjourning the meeting, I wish to inform members that, as decided in informal consultations, the Council at its meeting at 10.30 a.m. on Monday, 1 June, will hear closing statements from the representatives of the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory. The Council will also take decisions on its conclusions and recommendations to the Security Council contained in the report of the Drafting Committee and on agenda items 11 and 12.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.